



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 26 April 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
26 APRIL 1968

1. South Vietnam

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The most critical spot at the moment is the area around Hue [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] "N-day" terminology has appeared at least once in intercepts from this region.

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2. South Korea

The South Koreans are delaying a decision on the dispatch of 6,000 more troops to Vietnam. They say they are waiting until they can judge the extent of infiltration from the north this summer.

There are other considerations, however. First, Pak probably wants to register his concern over the recent US initiatives in Vietnam. More important, he probably hopes the delay will get him more US military aid and a stronger US commitment to help resist a North Korean attack.

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3. Czechoslovakia-Soviet Union

Relations had seemed to be settling down in recent weeks, but now new signs of mutual irritation are appearing.

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This friction has been punctuated by a courtly but surprisingly explicit debate between the media of the two countries.

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Some of the things General Sejna has told us about the earlier rounds in this spat suggest that the Soviets have been heavy-footed throughout. He says that during the Czech power struggle late last year, they guessed wrong more than once. At first they held aloof because they thought the dispute was between conservative factions. When Dubcek's "radical" outlook became apparent, it was the same Ambassador Chervonenko who weighed in heavily on Novotny's side while keeping lines of communication open to Dubcek.

After Dubcek's victory in December, the Soviets adapted quickly. They urged Novotny to yield gracefully in order not to drive Dubcek into the arms of the doctrinaire liberals. Sejna thinks Moscow is now concentrating on efforts to influence Dubcek, but we suspect the Soviets are keeping in touch with the conservatives as well.

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4. Soviet Union

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5. Poland

The students say there will be demonstrations in all major university cities beginning on Monday

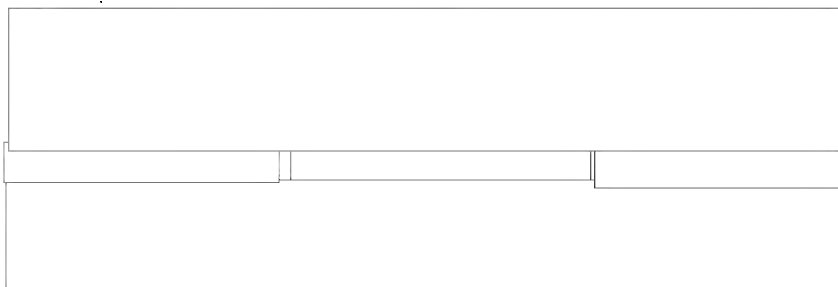
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to continue through the May Day celebrations next Wednesday. The students hope that by emphasizing economic issues, they can get more support than they had last time from the workers.

The government has already rounded up some student leaders and is keeping others on the run. It is likely to handle any demonstrations that do come off in the same hard-nose way. The students' militancy may in fact be giving party hardliners a chance to better their position at the expense of those who favor a more lenient policy.

6. Syria -
Soviet Union

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7. Israel -
Arab States

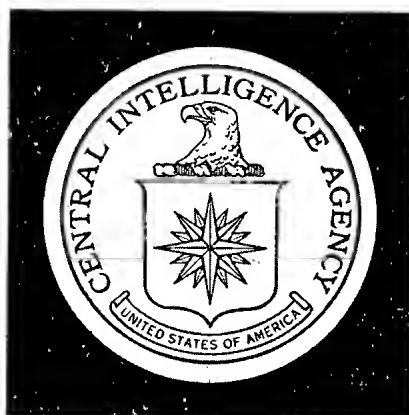
The Israelis are digging their heels in on the diplomatic front. They infuriated U Thant by flatly rejecting his letter requesting a cancellation of their parade in Jerusalem. Thant is thinking of adding his complaint to that of the Jordanians in the Security Council.

An Israeli spokesman told a US Embassy officer in Tel Aviv that the Israelis had gone about as far as they were willing to go in their position on the Jarring mission. This position, of course, leaves a big gap between them and the Arabs.

The spokesman put on a show of fatalism over future Arab-Israeli relations. He said that public opinion inside Israel is hardening and that the Israelis would be willing to hold to their essential bargaining positions for 20 years if necessary.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Bridge Repairs: The completion of a rail by-pass bridge south of the Doumer railroad/highway bridge over the Red River at Hanoi may permit through rail traffic into and south of the North Vietnamese capital for the first time since mid-December 1967. Since that time, the North Vietnamese have been forced to rely on ferries to move rail cars across the river or transship cargo by truck or watercraft.

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Hanoi Civil Defense: People in Hanoi are still digging in for new US air attacks [redacted]

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antiaircraft artillery was being brought into the city and new trenches being dug. Soon after the bombing restriction, there were press reports that civil defense preparations were being pushed forward.

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North Vietnamese Propaganda on Site Selection:
Yesterday Hanoi radio's daily offering on the talk site issue was a rather limp piece from the party newspaper rehashing the same arguments put forward for the past two weeks. The broadcast breaks no new ground but seems milder than earlier ones, as if Hanoi were temporarily marking time in its propaganda treatment of this subject.

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Cyprus Holds Up Ship Registration: The Cyprus Government is refusing to register a ship engaged in trade with North Vietnam. The owners of the ship, the Yvonne, are trying to get the decision overruled in the courts.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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